

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

City Hall Business and Economic Development Conference Room  
Justice Center Community Room  
16540 Moonlight Rd. Gardner, Kansas  
April 14, 2021  
6 p.m.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm in the Community Room of the Justice Center at 16540 Moonlight Rd., Gardner, Kansas. The following EDAC committee members attended, a quorum was present.

George Rifford; Brandon Williams; Stephanie Shaver; Harrison Hall.

Ex-Officio present:

Mayor, Steve Shute

Randy Gregorcyk

Staff present:

David Knopick; Robert Case; Melissa Krayca - Community Development staff

Nicole Beaton was not present

Harrison Hall departed meeting at 7:00 p.m.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments; no representative of the Gardner press attended the meeting.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

#### **1. Approval of minutes as written for the EDAC meeting on March 10, 2021**

**Motion made by Brandon Williams to approve the consent agenda item, seconded by George Rifford.**

**Motion passed 4-0.**

### **NEW BUSINESS**

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

#### **Review of current economic activity and city projects**

- a. Planned commercial developments**
- b. Planned housing growth and new subdivisions**

Mr. Knopick gave an update on the following developments:

- Grata Development at 175<sup>th</sup> & Clare Rd is moving along with building permits expected mid to late summer. Grata has also submitted a second phase.
- Hilltop Ridge at 167<sup>th</sup> & Kill Creek Rd is currently working on infrastructure / utilities and we anticipate to start permitting in the fall.
- Symphony Farms also at 167<sup>th</sup> & Kill Creek Rd is steadily building and applying for permits as well as successfully making pre-sales of their homes.
- Tuscan Farms at 197<sup>th</sup> & Gardner Rd has recently submitted 10 building permit applications for the development.
- Tallgrass Apartments is currently moving along with 1st phase and considering change to the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase with possible duplexes near the Copper Springs neighborhood.

Mr. Rifford asked if the developers were utilizing cost plus contracts and discussion ensued about the cost of lumber being so high and the current lack of labor force. It was explained that incentives are being asked about and the IRB Sales Tax Exemption tool is one of them. This tool provides an exemption to building material sales tax. Such an IRB is a tool that can help incentivize building but not typically impact Gardner due to not having a large building material supplier in the City.

Mr. Knopick stated that commercial building is moving relatively slow but it tends to follow residential building and he is optimistic considering we have some well-established brand names coming to Gardner such as Freddy's, Culvers and QuikTrip. QuikTrip is ready to start building and plans are complete but waiting on the road improvements to be completed. He also believes that housing diversity is important moving forward as young people find rental more appealing as they enter the workforce while still paying student loan debts. Additionally, the City will need to have enough starter homes available and projects for a variety of demographics even as larger homes are being built that will eventually be a family upgrade or 2<sup>nd</sup> home.

Mr. Gregorcyk agreed on the importance of such and believes that a 60-40% ratio of single to multifamily homes is a healthy balance in the housing market.

Acreage homes were discussed and Mr. Case stated that there has been interest expressed over the years and it could be a possibility at some point. Something to consider is that large acre lots if developed with appropriate infrastructure standards reflecting the context / character of the development may lower the cost impact of infrastructure.

Connectivity of neighborhoods was also discussed at length. There are many concerns on the lack of sidewalks and trails that interconnect neighborhoods and also connect to arterial roads leading to schools. Mr. Gregorcyk identified the concerns of current residents of St Johns Trace and the lack of sidewalks and connectivity that has been promised to be remedied for many years by previous administrations. He mentioned the concerns he has heard from the patrons over the years and that it should be a priority to provide safe walking options especially when we are creating more traffic with the new developments off 167<sup>th</sup> and 175<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Williams expressed his concern over the narrow street standards in neighborhoods and the difficult and sometimes impossible routes for emergency vehicles.

Mr. Knopick asked the members if they could pinpoint which existing neighborhood was the best quality neighborhood with most ideal design. The consensus from the group was Plum Creek Estates. They identified that development as having the best useable green space, ideal setbacks, sidewalk access, high quality trails and walking distance ease to the amenities of the community. Symphony Farms was mentioned as the 2<sup>nd</sup> choice because of the clubhouse and pool amenities in the neighborhood. It was agreed that Symphony Farms has set a higher bar on such amenity which is good for the community.

Mr. Williams asked if the builders came to Gardner to inquire about developing or if the City staff was seeking to bring them into the community. Mr. Knopick explained that it is a combination of both activities.

Mayor Shute recommended that it may be a good idea to have a joint meeting with the Parks and Public Works departments to discuss the short term needs of infrastructure and how to integrate into the present and future development plans.

Mayor Shute and Mr. Gregorcyk encouraged the EDAC members that they are within their authority to bring initiatives or recommendations to the City Council as they see fit. Mr. Knopick expressed his willingness to be of assistance and agreed that it would be a good idea to open up joint communication and draw attention to the concerns of the community when it pertains to the development of the city.

Mayor Shute suggested the committee become more familiar with the Gardner Comprehensive Plan and the Gardner Development Strategy documents and try to gauge if they coordinate well with one another. The documents should not just be owned by the City and that if people are not engaged then ownership of the documents depletes.

Mr. Williams asked if the group is able to tweak the documents if they seem to be outdated or not relevant any longer. Mr. Knopick asked the committee to analyze how the documents coordinate with one another and suggested to members if there are changes that could be made to bring those up for discussion and consideration.

Ms. Shaver commented on how the YouTube videos of City meetings were lengthy and may lose the attention of the citizens. She asked if the information could be shortened and possibly shared on social media so that reliable information gets to the community as opposed to the gossip of various groups.

Mayor Shute discussed how it was important that we are able to market our story on the website and social media and would like to have more tools and staffing to create a better outreach. He also suggested a Town Hall meeting might be a way to engage the conversation with the community.

Mr. Rifford suggested that at the next meeting the committee start with Item 2 on the current agenda since the conversation on item 1 was discussed at length but, everyone agreed it was a good start to understanding the role of the EDAC.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Committee member Nicole Beaton will be resigning position and City Council will interview for a new appointment.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion to adjourn made by Gifford and seconded by Shaver.**

**Motion passed 3-0.**

**Motion adjourned at 08:20p**

**The next meeting will be May 12, 2021 at 6 pm in the Justice Center Community Room at 16540 Moonlight Rd.**